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ALRESFORD RURAL DISTRICT.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1925.

JACOB AND JOHNSON, PRINTERS, WINCHESTER.

THE ANNUAL REPORT
ON THE
ALRESFORD RURAL DISTRICT
FOR THE YEAR 1925
BY
THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

GENTLEMEN,

The Annual Report for 1925 is a Survey Report and will be arranged in the order set out in a Memorandum issued by the Ministry of Health.

1. **Natural and Social Conditions of the District.**—(a) Area, 42,287 acres. (b) Population according to the census in 1921, 7355. Estimated population in 1925, 7490. (c) Physical features and general character of the area. The surface of the District is undulating in character, varying in height above sea level from 300 feet in the valleys to 675 feet on the hills, and is well wooded in many parts. The hills are composed of flinty chalk (Upper Cretaceous) and form the "Downs" which have thin top soil covered with short, close, sweet pasture. Some of the higher land is covered with a fairly thick clayey loam and is good corn land. In the valleys there are some thick deposits of gravel. The roads in some of the lower parts of the District are liable to be very wet and even flooded in very wet weather due to the drainage off the higher fields on either side, and in some places springs burst out in the roadway itself. The surface of the roads is in many parts in a disgraceful condition owing to the heavy motor traffic for which the roads are quite unsuitable. Holes as large as wash-hand basins extending for some distance on some of the roads making cycling, motor traffic, and even walking, in the dark dangerous. The workers of the District are chiefly agriculturists and those who supply the daily wants of those engaged in this occupation. There are no factories in the District. (d) Number of inhabited houses in 1921, 2194. (e) Number of families or separate occupiers in 1921, 2200. (f) Rateable value, £49,425. Same represented by a penny rate, £155 : 10 : 7. (g) Amount of Poor Law Relief, £1237 : 3 : 5.

2. Vital Statistics.

BIRTHS. Legitimate —Males 57 Females 70
 Illegitimate—Males 4 Females 6

Birth rate 18·2 per 1000.

DEATHS. Males 53. Females 40. Death rate 12·4 per 1000.

Number of women dying in, or in consequence of, childbirth—

From sepsis, one. From other causes, nil.

Deaths of infants under one year of age per 1000 births 43·7

None of which are illegitimate.

Deaths from measles ... 1

Deaths from whooping cough ... nil

Deaths from diarrhoea (under two years of age) ... 1

There were no deaths from water-borne diseases such as typhoid fever, and only one death from any of the infectious diseases, excluding tuberculosis, which accounted for three deaths. Both the death rate and the birth rate are about the same as those for the whole of England and Wales.

3. General Provision of Health Services in the Area.—(a)

Hospitals provided or subsidized by the Local Authority or by the County Council, none. Infectious cases, except small-pox and measles, are removed to the Alton Rural District Infectious Hospital and paid for by contract. Small-pox cases are provided for by the County Council at the Winchester Rural District Infectious Hospital. Tubercular cases are sent by the County Council to sanatoria at Ventnor, Bournemouth, and Chandlersford. Maternity cases are admitted to the Maternity Ward of the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester, under order from the County Medical Officer of Health. (b) Any institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants, and homeless children: the Workhouse with its Infirmary and Maternity Wards. (c) Ambulance facilities. (i.) Infectious cases are removed by ambulance sent from either Infectious Hospital. (ii.) Non-infectious and accident cases are removed by motor car or by ambulance sent by the Royal Hampshire County Hospital at the expense of the patient, or of the Local Authority in suitable cases. (d) Clinics and Treatment Centres, none. (e) Public Health Officers of the Local Authority consist of a part time Medical Officer of Health and a full time Sanitary Inspector. (f) Professional Nursing in the Home. (i.) General. There is no provision by the Local Authority. (ii.) Infectious Diseases. In the case of an epidemic of measles the Sanitary Authority will provide nurses in suitable cases for home nursing. (g) Midwives. There is no employment of, or a subsidy to, Practising Midwives by the Local Authority. There are seven Midwives practising in the District. (h) Chemical

Work. Any sample of water can be sent to the Laboratory of the County Council, Winchester. (i.) Legislation in Force. The Bye-laws regarding the erection of buildings were adopted in 1904.

4. **Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.**—(1) WATER.

(a) The water supply of the District has been sufficient and of good quality, and is obtained from the following sources:— (i.) Most of the houses in Alresford Town receive their water from the Alresford Water Works by constant supply. These works draw their water from a deep well sunk in the chalk hill to the south of the town and there is no chance of pollution. The water is pumped by a gas engine into a reservoir on the top of a tower from whence it gravitates to the houses which it supplies directly. (ii.) Several of the larger houses are supplied by private rams, worked by a running stream, which is also the source of the water consumed. (iii.) Wells sunk in, or tubes driven into, the chalk in the lower parts of the District, supply some houses. Those living in the higher parts depend upon rain water stored in underground tanks, and are the only sufferers in a dry season, when water may have to be carted from the nearest source of supply. (iv.) In Cheriton many dip their water from the stream as it runs through the village. (2) RIVERS AND STREAMS. No cases of pollution have been observed during the year. (3) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE. There is no sewerage scheme in the District. A few houses have their own septic tank process, but most of the houses with W.C's drain into dead wells dug in the chalk, which are cleaned out at the expense of the occupier, the contents being disposed of on the land. Many small houses and cottages have the old privy vault in the garden, which in many cases is found more satisfactory than E.C's. With intelligent and cleanly people the E.C's are a great success, with the opposite class they are a failure, for they are too ignorant or too idle to get dry earth or to empty the buckets when full. During the year 29 E.C's were converted into W.C's. It was found necessary during the year to remodel the drainage of the 20 Council Cottages in Alresford owing to the unsatisfactory condition of the so-called settling tank system for the bath and sink water, and to the fact that the E.C's were situated too close to the larder. The E.C's have been replaced by W.C's which drain through five filters into five soak away cesspools. SCAVENGING. About 90 houses in New Alresford have receptacles for holding household refuse, which are of metal with fitting lid and are satisfactory, but the rest of the houses have all sorts of most unsuitable ones. Many have wooden boxes with no lid so that the refuse blows about and if not under cover rain gets in making a wet smelling mass

which pollutes the air and soaks through the bottom of the box and so making the man's clothes, who has to carry it to empty into his dust cart, in a horrid mess. Other uncovered receptacles are old tin boxes and buckets. The receptacles also contain many things that ought not to be there, such as bread and lumps of coal that might be used in the house, and vegetable refuse which ought to be given to pigs or chickens or buried in the garden. Every house ought to have a card with a large D on it to put in the window to show the collector that there is a receptacle to empty, if the owner cannot put it in a suitable position for the man to see. The Collector has asked for and has been promised these cards for distribution but has never obtained them. The scavenging of the Town of Alresford requires much more supervision than it has had; besides the unsuitable receptacles above mentioned, there is very much more that could be done in cleaning up many of the back yards where heaps of rubbish and decaying vegetable matter are often found. The Scavenging Contractor is under a great disadvantage in having only a six months contract, as he may have the winter months with all the bad weather and the larger amount of refuse to remove, and lose his contract for the summer months which is much less laborious, it also makes the arrangement of the number of horses to keep more difficult. There are two other points connected with the scavenging of Alresford to which I should like to draw the attention of the Local Authority. The first is that there ought to be a covered dust cart, and secondly that the water barrel used for flushing the drains is too big and heavy for it to be used with safety on these slippery roads. The main streets in Alresford are often in a very untidy condition from waste paper and packing refuse blowing about them. A man collects the refuse on two days of the week, but he tells me that after cleaning up the streets on Saturday they are just as bad early Sunday morning, as if someone swept refuse out into the street late on Saturday night. In the olden days the inhabitants used to prognosticate the weather by the distance the paper was blown down towards the north end of Broad Street, when it reached a certain lamp post rain was certain to follow. In these days of barometers and wireless it seems hardly necessary to continue this unsightly and unsanitary method of weather forecasting, and I wish notices could be issued forbidding the unpacking of boxes in the street and the brushing of refuse from houses into it. In several cases sewage is washed out of farm buildings by the rain on to the roads, causing a nuisance to passers by and to houses in the neighbourhood, and the sides of the road in dry weather look dirty and untidy, even if they are not always offensive and dangerous to health. If cattle sheds have to be put up near a

public road, more care should be taken to see that there is no risk, after a heavy rain fall, of the liquid manure being washed on to it.

5. Sanitary Inspection of the Area.—The number of inspections made during the year was 1796, and the defects found 248, of which 244 were remedied by informal notices and 4 by statutory ones. With the exception of 4 all these defects have been remedied. There are 2 factories with no defect found, and 28 workshops in which 3 defects in cleanliness and drainage were found and remedied. The bakehouses were visited 17 times and 2 defects were found and remedied. The 6 slaughter houses were inspected and 2 defects were remedied. Ten houses were disinfected after infectious illness by means of formalin vapour. **SCHOOLS.** The sanitary condition and water supply of the schools are on the whole satisfactory. Ropley school has however to fetch its supply of water from outside as it is dependent upon a rain water supply. The schools were visited twenty times during the year and two defects were remedied. To prevent the spread of infection amongst school children, all heads of schools have addressed post cards upon which they send to the Medical Officer of Health the names of any children who are away from school and suffering from any infectious illness.

6. Housing.—(1) **GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS.** (a) In most of the villages there is a shortage of labourers cottages with the exception of Bramdean, in which there are four empty ones. (b) Measures taken or contemplated to meet any shortage. In 1920 sites were chosen upon which to erect 72 new cottages, but owing to financial and other reasons only 24 have been erected under that scheme, 20 in Alresford and 4 in Bramdean. (c) There has been no important changes in population, nor is any anticipated in the future unless it is a decrease in the skilled agricultural labourers. (2) **OVERCROWDING.** (a) Extent. Four cases of overcrowding were remedied in the year and several remain owing to cottage shortage. (b) Causes. Shortage of cottages. Young couples getting married before they have secured a house to live in. To remedy this one can only wait for cottages to become vacant or new ones built. (3) **FITNESS OF HOUSES.** The District contains a large number of old thatched cottages, which are often, by reason of their construction, damp, ill-ventilated, and deficient in sunlight; their foundations are always damp which spreads up the walls, as they have no waterproof flooring under the bricks which are laid directly upon the earth. The thatch overshadowing the bedroom windows, which are usually too small, makes the rooms dark and ill-ventilated, and the rain

dripping off the thatch adds still more to the dampness of the house. Many of the cottages in Cheriton and Bramdean have especially very damp floors owing to the ground level of the water being very near the surface, consequently the floors are very uneven and the bricks work loose. The want of a bedroom with a good fireplace for the sick, and a proper pantry for the storage of food is a very real one in many cottages. These defects in construction, besides causing ill health, make it impossible to keep the house tidy inside, as the paper is continually falling off the walls and the wood work is mouldy and rotten. Some of the tenants are continually trying to remedy these evils themselves as the owners seem disinclined in some cases to undertake any structural repairs. Heaps of refuse are allowed to accumulate too near the houses, and the privy vaults and earth closets are allowed to come over full. If we are to overcome these difficulties very much more time must be given to a thorough inspection of cottage property. We ought to know much more of the details of individual cottages, such as their source of water supply, their sanitary accommodation, the cleanliness of the house inside, and the absence of accumulation of refuse outside, and with this knowledge more pressure ought to be put on the owners who fail to carry out their obligations. There is no reason why every cottage in the District could not be gone thoroughly over by the Sanitary Inspector, and essential details properly recorded for reference at any future time. I estimate that there are about 1200-1300 houses with under six rooms in the District, and so if thirty cottages were reported on per week, a not very arduous task, the whole record could be completed easily within the year.

(4) UNHEALTHY AREAS. There are no particular unhealthy areas in the District. (5) BYE-LAWS relating to houses, to houses let in lodgings, and to tents, vans, sheds, etc. The existing building bye-laws adopted in 1904, seem sufficient for the District.

Housing Statistics for the year 1925.

(a) Total number of new houses erected during the year	17
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :—	
(i.) By the Local Authority	Nil
(ii.) By other bodies or persons	4
1. UNFIT DWELLING HOUSES. Inspection.	
(i.) Total number of houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health and Housing Acts)	253
(ii.) Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910,	

	or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	188
(iii.)	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	3
(iv.)	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub- head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ...	87
2.	REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES.	
	Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ...	84
3.	ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS.	
A.	Proceedings under Section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925.	
(i.)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	nil
(ii.)	Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices—	
(a)	By owners	nil
(b)	By Local Authority in default of owners	nil
(iii.)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declaration by owners of intention to close	nil
B.	Proceedings under Public Health Acts.	
(i.)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	nil
(ii.)	Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices—	
(a)	By owners	nil
(b)	By Local Authority in default of owners	nil
C.	Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925.	
(i.)	Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders ...	nil
(ii.)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made ...	nil
(iii.)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the dwelling houses having been rendered fit	nil

(iv.) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	...	nil
(v.) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders	...	nil

7. **Inspection and Supervision of Food.**—(a) MILK SUPPLY. This area is a large producer of milk, the greater part, amounting to about 500,000 gallons per annum, being sent away to London and other places. In the villages there is a scarcity of milk for home consumption, especially if the children had anything like the amount which is considered necessary for effective growth and nutrition. It is quite generally held that the amount of milk a family uses is determined largely by its ability to pay, but this is not the case, the purchase of milk is determined by the appreciation of the value of milk as a food rather than by the family income, and there is no relationship between the amount of income and the quantity of milk bought. Neither is there a close relationship between the number of children and the quantity of milk used. If a large family takes more milk than a smaller one it is not because the income is larger, often the reverse, but because they appreciate the food value of milk. If the producer therefore wishes to increase the consumption of milk and milk products he must realize the necessity of educating the masses as to the value of them as a food when it is produced in a clean manner. Cleanliness is especially necessary if the producer wishes the medical profession to do all in its power to encourage the consumption of fresh cows milk. The milk industry is capable of material increase and could be profitably expanded with great advantage to the agricultural community, for at the present time only about 50 % of the milk used is produced in this country. The present milk supply is unsatisfactory for several reasons: (i.) No effective steps are taken to prevent human tuberculosis being acquired from milk derived from infected cows. For instance, during the year three samples of milk from this area were found to contain the tubercle bacilli, the quantity of milk consumed that contained them we do not know. To proceed against a producer the Local Authority has to prove that the producer “knew or could by the exercise of ordinary care have ascertained that the cow was suffering from this disease.” The diagnosis of udder tuberculosis is often difficult even to the skilled Veterinary Surgeon, while there appears to be nothing to prevent the cow keeper selling the cow, without disclosing his suspicion about an unthrifty animal. To be effective as a preventative measure it seems that a wholetime Veterinary Surgeon will have to be appointed for a large area to systematically examine all dairy cows. Condemning cows only after the milk has been found

infected, and which infection may have been going on for weeks or even months, seems of little use in the prevention of bovine tuberculosis in the human subject, whatever else it may be as an agricultural measure to secure the farmer compensation. Removal of an infected animal will not stay the spread of infection amongst the remainder unless the cowsheds are thoroughly disinfected, and this is impossible in many of the old thatched, dark, and ill-ventilated sheds. (ii.) In some cases the conditions under which milk is produced fall a long way below what modern hygiene demands as necessary, and there is no effective control over the conditions of production. There is no inducement to the individual milk producer to supply a better quality milk unless he has a local market and can earn a reputation for the quality of his milk. The great bulk of the milk produced fetches the same price, clean or dirty. We may see the milk taken from dirty cows by the most dirty methods but have no power to prevent its being sent away wholesale. The nearest approach to power to take action would be to seize the milk under Section 116 of the Public Health Act, 1875, "as diseased, or unsound, or unwholesome, or unfit for the food of man," but I know of no case in which it has been employed. It has been suggested that scientifically controlled pasteurization would overcome all difficulties, but its success depends upon efficient working, and at any time the machinery may breakdown, and if relied upon as the sole safeguard may fail us. Pasteurization is therefore no substitute for cleanliness but is a great addition to it, if used as in the United States with a complete inspection system, bacteriological examination, and the summary rejection of all dirty and below standard milk. In this country the advocates of pasteurization do not couple all this together. Pasteurization is also an expensive matter. I should estimate that the milk sent from this area costs £1000 a year to pasteurize, and if to this is added the loss from sour milk which is calculated to amount to 1% in winter and 2% in summer it is evident there is something to be said for clean milk production even from a money point of view. In this area a proper supply of hot water, soap, and towels close to the milking shed is very much needed in many cases as well as clean damp cloths to wash the cows udders before milking. The approach to the cowsheds is in many cases very dirty and the manure is heaped too near the sheds for clean milk production. The sterilization of milking vessels and churns by steam might be much more widely used, as a very inexpensive method can be fitted up in any farm that has a good copper with a tightly fitting lid through which a pipe is fitted for emitting steam; the vessel to be sterilized being inverted over the pipe after it has been thoroughly cleansed by rinsing with cold and hot water. (iii.)

Subsequent to production many undesirable conditions exist. Some of the churns used are so dented and rusted inside that proper cleansing is impossible. Two churns in this condition were condemned at Alresford Station this year. The same defects exist for transit that I complained of twenty years ago. The churns are dumped on the platform in the sun and dust, and the lids being unlocked the milk can be tampered with on the way. The milk vans are often hot and dirty, even fish vans have been used for the transportation of milk. The Railway Companies ought to be responsible for the care and coolness of the milk after receiving it at the Stations in locked churns, when the producers responsibility should cease. The milk producer in many cases ought to have our sympathy, as it is a most difficult task to train up good clean conscientious milkers who are deeply interested in the production of a cleanly article and it is only such who will succeed in producing it. Clean milk competitions, which are becoming more common, in which prizes are given to the milkers, ought to do much to stimulate interest in its production. More clean milk will be produced by education than by legislation. Two producers are licensed to produce grade A tuberculin tested milk. No licences have been granted for the pasteurization of milk. There has been no refusal or revocation of registration of retailers or of licences for graded milk.

(b) MEAT. The Sanitary Inspector has the time when regular slaughtering takes place by the butchers, but no inspection of the animals at the time of slaughter is carried out. As no meat is sent away to other markets from this District, I see no reason for the Local Authority to adopt any distinctive mark for branding carcasses.

The following table gives the number of private slaughter-houses in use in this area at the dates mentioned—

		In 1920		In January, 1925		In December, 1925.
Registered	...	4	...	4	...	4
Licensed	...	nil	...	2	...	2
		—		—		—
Total		<u>4</u>	...	<u>6</u>	...	<u>6</u>

(c) OTHER FOODS. Bakehouses, nine in number, were inspected during the year and two minor defects remedied. It would be a great help if the Local Authority made application to the Ministry of Health for an Order applying to this District the following provision of the Public Health Act, 1925, namely, Section 72—Providing precautions against contamination of food kept in any house or premises and intended for sale. Prevalence of, and control over, Infectious Diseases since 1920.

During the years 1920-1925 inclusive there have been no severe epidemics of infectious disease. There have been 33 cases of scarlet fever and four of diphtheria, two of the latter cases coming from London with the disease. One case of typhoid fever was notified in 1924 in a man who was infected in London. The Medical Officer of Health has always a supply of diphtheria antitoxin for use on the application of any Medical Practitioner in the District. Pathological and bacteriological specimens are sent to the Laboratory, The Castle, Winchester, for examination and report in any doubtful case, and these facilities are largely used. Contacts with cases of diphtheria are swabbed and isolated if positive, but its value is very problematical, as the general experience throughout the world is that at any time something like 1% of all people otherwise in good health are diphtheria bacilli carriers. Disinfection is carried out by spraying with formalin after recovery or removal of the infectious case. The addition of steam disinfection of the bedding has been carried out in addition under very careful management in some places, and the conclusion come to is that disinfection as commonly carried out is without influence in the spread of diphtheria and scarlet fever. This conclusion was arrived at by Chapin, of Providence, in 1905, and by Forbes, of Brighton, in 1910, and disinfection has not been carried out since these dates in these towns with no ill effect to the public health. The Schick and Dick tests in diphtheria and scarlet fever respectively on the recently developed artificial methods of immunization against these diseases have not been tested in this District for the following reasons. (i.) Both the tests and the immunization processes are still on their trial, and Medical Officers of Health of large cities like Edinburgh and Birmingham seem to be of the opinion that to be effectively done a population of 100,000 or more is required who would appoint a Medical Officer, an epidemicaligist, to carry out these duties, as well as study the occurrence of infectious diseases in the area with a view to reduction, and do such bacteriological work as might be appropriate to the District. (ii.) With the occurrence of only 33 cases of scarlet fever and four of diphtheria during the last six years the financial burden seems hardly warranted. The number of (a) primary vaccinations and (b) re-vaccinations performed by the Medical Officer of Health under the Public Health (Small-pox Prevention) Regulations, 1917, is nil. No deaths from influenza occurred during the year, and there have been no serious epidemics in 1920-1925. The cleansing and disinfection of verminous persons and their belongings are carried out at the Workhouse. Disinfection of premises and articles which have been exposed to infection is carried out by the formalin spray.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1925.

Disease	Total cases notified Ages	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total deaths
Scarlet Fever	5—10 years	2	nil
	10—15 years	1	
	15—20 years	1	
	20—25 years	2	
		6	

TUBERCULOSIS. New cases and mortality during 1925—

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
10—15 years	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
15—20 years	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...
20—25 years	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
25—35 years	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
35—45 years	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Totals	1	2	...	...	1	1	...	1

PUBLIC HEALTH (PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS) REGULATIONS, 1925.

No tuberculous employees were working in the milk trade.

Any action under Article 3 no

Number of notices served under Article 5 nil

Number of appeals under Article 6 nil

Number of cases in which compensation has been paid nil

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1925, SECTION 62. No action was necessary under this Section.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE. Two cases of puerperal fever occurred during the year with one death, and there was one death of an infant from pneumonia following measles. There was no epidemic of diarrhoea during the year and no case of ophthalmia neonatorum was notified. Towards the end of the year there was an epidemic of German measles and a few cases of measles; the latter cases being caused by the visit of children to London where the disease was very prevalent.

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

F. W. JOLLYE,

